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REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests entry of the above Preliminary Amendment to place this U.S. Patent Application in better form for examination and prosecution before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The claims have been amended to more definitely and fully claim the subject matter of Applicant's invention. Applicant urges that the above Preliminary Amendment introduces no new matter into this U.S. Patent Application.

Applicant sincerely believes that this U.S. Patent Application is now in condition for examination and prosecution before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Respectfully submitted,



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PLASMA SOURCE OF DIRECTED BEAMS AND APPLICATION THEREOF TOMICROLITHOGRAPHY~~BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION~~

Field of the Invention

This [present] invention [concerns] ^{relates to} the generation of
 5 radiation at a desired wavelength.

More precisely, [the] ^{this} invention [concerns] ^{relates to} a process for the
 generation in a given direction of radiation emissions in a
 desired range of wavelengths, where the [said] process includes:

[- the production of] ^{producing} initial radiation by a radiation
 10 source whose wavelengths includes the [said] desired range []; and
 [] filtering [of] the [said] initial radiation, [so as] to
 substantially eliminate the part of the initial radiation
 whose wavelength is outside the [said] desired range.

The invention also ^{relates to} [concerns] a radiation generating device
 15 that can be used to implement such a process, as well as a
 lithography device incorporating such a generation device.

[We are already familiar with processes] ^{Discussion of Related Art} and devices ^{Processes similar to} [of] the
 type mentioned above ^{are known}

One (non-limiting) example of implementation [thus]
 20 concerns the generation of radiation at a desired wavelength
 intended for an optical chain, for lithography applications on
 a photosensitive substrate. [Figure] ^{FIG. 1} [thus] diagrammatically
 illustrates an optical system 100, that ^{includes} [consists of] the
 following in succession:

25 [-] a generator 10 of radiation in a desired range of
 wavelengths [];

[] a lens assembly 11 which receives the radiation coming from the generator 10 and processes it (e.g., by subjecting it to collimation and/or [focussing] ^{focusing} of its beams [];

5 [] a mask 12 which receives the processed radiation coming from the lens assembly ¹¹ and selectively allows to pass only the beams arriving at the mask via a transmission pattern 120, with the remainder of the radiation being stopped by the mask []; and

10 [] a substrate 13 which receives the beams that have been transmitted by the mask, and whose surface exposed to the radiation bears a photo-resistant or photosensitive product.

The beams arriving at the substrate react with the product and thus form, on the surface of the substrate, a
15 pattern that matches the transmission pattern of the mask.

The desired range of wavelengths of the generator 10 can in particular be located in the ultra-violet (UV) spectrum, or in the extreme UV (EUV) spectra.

Note that in this text, [we conventionally use] the term
20 "EUV" ^{is conventionally used} to refer to both [the] EUV beams and soft x-rays.

The EUV beams are associated with very short wavelengths ^{wavelengths} (less than 100 nm, and of the order of a few tens of nms for example, where an application corresponds to a wavelength of 13.5 nm). This is advantageous in particular for
25 photolithography applications, since in a corresponding

manner, the patterns drawn by the beams can be of very small dimensions. In particular, this allows the formation of a larger quantity of patterns on a substrate of the same size.

It is necessary however to associate radiation filtering
5 resources with the radiation generator.

In [fact in] certain ^{embodiments} [cases], [-] in particular for radiation generators whose wavelength is in the EUV range, [-] the generator includes a radiation source of the plasma source type.

10 [Now in] ^{I_n} addition to the desired radiation, such radiation sources also emit:

[-] radiation whose wavelengths do not correspond to the desired range, and/or

15 [-] solid debris resulting from the interaction between the plasma and solid parts of the chamber in which this plasma is located (target, walls of the chamber, etc.).

In order to isolate, in the radiation coming from the source of the generator, only the beams that are at a desired wavelength, it is therefore necessary to provide filtering
20 resources downstream of the source (e.g., immediately downstream of the source, in order to avoid exposing the mask to debris which could damage it).

In a known manner, such filtering resources include a multi-layer mirror which selectively reflects the beams
25 according to their wavelength.

Such a multi-layer mirror thus functions as a band-pass filter.

[It obviously] ^{Such a multi-layer mirror} does not pass on the undesirable debris which can be emitted by the source, so that the elements
5 located downstream of the filtering resources are not exposed to such debris.

Such a solution [actually] allows filtering out of the beams emitted by a radiation source that ^{can} [is liable to] produce such debris.

10 However, one drawback associated with such a known configuration is that the debris emitted by the source can damage the mirror of the filtering resources.

[Of course it] ^{It} would be possible to envisage distancing the [said] filtering resources from the source [so as] to reduce the
15 probability that debris will damage the mirror of these filtering resources.

In this case however, there would be a significant reduction in the radiation stream recovered by the filtering resources, thus adversely affecting the performance of the
20 whole optical system.

It therefore appears that the known configurations for generating radiation at a desired wavelength are associated with drawbacks when the radiation source [is liable to] ^{can} generate debris.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In particular, this disadvantage concerns applications in which the desired wavelengths fall in the EUV area.

[The aim] ^{One object} of the invention is to ^{provide processes and devices that avoid} [enable one to get around] these drawbacks.

5 In order to attain this objective, the invention proposes, according to ^{one embodiment} [a first aspect], a process for the generation, in a given emission direction, of radiation in a desired range of wavelengths, where the [said] process includes:

10 [- the production of] ^{producing beams of} [initial radiation by a radiation source, whose wavelengths include the [said] desired range], and
[-] filtering of the [said] initial radiation, [so as] to substantially eliminate the beams of the initial radiation whose wavelength is outside the [said] desired range.

[characterised in that] ^{wherein} [the [said] filtration] ^{filtering} is achieved by
15 introducing a controlled distribution of the refraction index of the beams in a control region that is traversed by the initial radiation, [so as] to selectively deflect the beams of the initial radiation according to their wavelength, and to recover the beams of a desired wavelength.

20 Preferred, though not limiting, aspects of such a process are [as follows]:

[-] the [said] controlled distribution of the refraction index of the beams is obtained by controlling the density distribution of electrons in the [said] control region],

25 [-] the [said] control region is located in a plasma],

[] the [said] plasma containing the [said] control region is itself contained in a chamber associated with the [said] radiation source [];

[] electron density control is effected [so as] to obtain
 5 an electron density which is greater at a distance from a median initial radiation emission line than it is on the [said] median emission line of the initial radiation [];

[] the [said] median initial radiation emission line is a straight initial radiation line, and the [said] initial
 10 radiation is produced by the [said] radiation source with a [more or less] ^{generally} axi-symmetrical distribution around the [said] straight initial radiation line [];

[] in order to obtain the [said] electron density distribution, an input of energy is applied to the [said]
 15 plasma along the [said] median initial radiation emission line [] ; and

[] the [said] energy input is effected by [ionisation] ^{ionization} of the plasma along the [said] median initial radiation emission line [] ;

[] in ^{In} order to effect the [said ionisation] ^{ionization} the
 20 following operations are required:

[] establishment of an electrical voltage at the terminals of the chamber containing the plasma, the [said] terminals being spaced in the general direction defined
 25 by the [said] median initial radiation emission line [] ;

[] application of an energy beam to [said] ^{the} median initial radiation emission line [];

[] in order to recover the beams of a desired wavelength, there is at least one window downstream of the
 5 [said] control region, to selectively pass beams in the desired wavelength range [];

[] each window is positioned on the [said] median initial radiation emission line, with a curvilinear abscissa corresponding to the place of intersection of the [said] beams
 10 in the desired wavelength range which were deflected with the [said] median initial radiation emission line [];

[] the [said] desired range of wavelengths falls within the interval [0-100 nm] ^{and}

[] the [said] desired range of wavelengths falls within
 15 the EUV spectrum.

According to a second aspect, the invention also proposes a device for the generation, in a given emission direction, of radiation in a desired range of wavelengths, where the [said]
 device includes:

20 [] a source of initial radiation whose wavelengths include the [said] desired range ^{and}

[] filtering resources of the [said] initial radiation, [so as] to substantially eliminate the beams of the initial radiation whose wavelength is outside the [said] desired
 25 range,

[characterised in that] ^{wherein} the [said] filtering resources
 include the means to introduce a controlled distribution of
 the refraction index of the beams in a control region that is
 traversed by the initial radiation, [so as] to selectively
 5 deflect the beams of the initial radiation according to their
 wavelength, and to recover the beams of a desired wavelength.

Preferred, though not limiting, aspects of such a device are as follows:

10 [-] the [said] means to introduce a controlled
 distribution of the refraction index includes resources to
 control the electron density distribution in the [said]
 control region;

[-] the [said] control region is located in a plasma;

15 [-] the [said] plasma containing the [said] control region
 is itself contained in a chamber associated with the [said]
 radiation source;

20 [-] the [said] resources to control the electron density
 distribution [are capable of achieving] ^{can achieve} an electron density
 which is greater at a distance from a median initial
 radiation emission line than it is on the [said] median
 initial radiation emission line;

[-] the [said] median initial radiation emission line is a
 straight initial radiation line, and the [said] resources to
 control the electron density distribution [are capable of

achieving^{can achieve} an electron density that is^{generally} [more or less] axis-symmetrical around the [said] straight initial radiation line^{];}

5 [-] the [said] resources to control the electron density distribution include resources for injecting energy into the [said] plasma along the [said] median initial radiation emission line^{];}

[-] the [said] resources for injecting energy include resources for [ionisation]^{ionization} of the plasma along the [said] median emission line of the initial radiation^{];}

10 [-] the [said] resources for injecting energy include resources to:

15 [-] establish an electrical voltage at the terminals of the chamber containing the plasma, with the [said] terminals being spaced in the general direction defined by the [said] median initial radiation emission line^{]; and}

[-] apply an energy beam to^{the} [said] median initial radiation emission line^{];}

20 [-] downstream of the [said] control region, the device includes at least one window to selectively pass beams in the desired wavelength range^{];}

[-] each window is positioned on the [said] median initial radiation emission line, with a curvilinear abscissa corresponding to the place of intersection of the [said] beams

in the desired wavelength range, which were deflected with the [said] median initial radiation emission line[.];

[] the device includes an additional multi-layer filtration mirror in association with at least some windows[.];

5 [] the device includes a multiplicity of modules, which each include a source of initial radiation and associated filtering resources, as well as an optical resource that can be used to collect the radiation subjected to filtration, in order to re-direct it outside of the device[.];

10 [] the [said] optical resource is a multi-layer mirror which [is also capable of finalising] ^{can finalize} filtering of the [said] radiation[.];

[] the [said] desired range of wavelengths falls within the interval [0-100 nm] ^{and}

15 [] the [said] desired range of wavelengths falls within the EUV spectrum.

The invention [finally] ^{also} concerns a lithography device that includes a generation device according to one of the above aspects.

20 Other aspects, objectives and advantages of the invention will appear more clearly on reading the following description of the invention, which is provided with reference to the appended drawings on which, apart from [figure] ^{FIG. 1} [] which has already been described above[.].

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating an optical system.

[figure] 2 is a schematic diagram of a radiation generator according to the invention.

[figure] 3 is a similar representation, illustrating an electron density distribution which is controlled in a particular manner in the context of the invention.

[figure] 4 illustrates a particular method of implementation of the invention with a multiplicity of radiation sources.

FIG. DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[Figure] 2 diagrammatically illustrates a radiation generator 20 according to the invention.

This radiation generator includes a chamber 21 which is generally closed but with one side 210 open to let pass the beams emitted by the chamber.

The chamber 21 includes a source 211 that ^{can produce an} [is capable of producing] initial radiation R0.

Typically this is a source containing a plasma.

The initial radiation includes beams whose wavelength corresponds to a desired range of wavelengths.

In a preferred but not limiting ^{embodiment} [application] of the invention, the desired range of wavelengths falls within the interval [0-100 nm].

This desired range of wavelengths can thus be located in the EUV spectrum.

The chamber 21 ^{can produce} [is] thus [capable of producing] initial radiation in which a significant quantity of beams correspond to the desired wavelength range.

As mentioned previously, it is possible however that
 5 undesirable effects can be associated with the emission from the source:

[] the initial radiation can also contain beams whose wavelengths do not correspond exactly to the desired range, and

[] and it is also possible that the source 211 may emit
 10 a certain amount of debris with the initial radiation.

In order to prevent these undesirable effects, the generator 20 includes resources for filtering the initial radiation.

These filtering resources ^{can introduce} [are capable of introducing] a
 15 controlled distribution of the refraction index of the beams in a control region 212 traversed by the initial radiation, [so as] to selectively deflect the beams of the initial radiation according to their wavelength.

The beams of a desired wavelength are then recovered (in
 20 particular using resources which will be described in this text).

^{Such embodiment makes} [We are thus making] use of a physical principle similar to that, for example, which causes the deflection of light beams in the presence of a gradient of the refraction index of the

air (the particular case of air with high temperature gradients).

In the ^{embodiment} ~~case~~ illustrated in ^{FIG.} ~~figure~~ 2, the control region is located inside of the chamber itself 21.

5 Note that it is also possible for this control region to be located outside the chamber 21, downstream of the latter on the trajectory of the initial radiation.

Control of the distribution of the refraction index in the control region can be achieved by controlling the electron
10 density distribution in the ~~said~~ control region.

In this regard, it is ~~in fact~~ possible to exploit the relationship linking the refraction index η to the electron density n_e :

$\eta = (1 - n_e/n_c)^{1/2}$, where n represents a critical electron
15 density value beyond which the beams are no longer able to pass, since this value of n_c is related to the wavelength of the beams concerned ~~by~~.

Returning to the method of implementation illustrated in ^{FIG.} ~~figure~~ 2, the control region 212 is therefore located in the
20 chamber 21, and this control region is thus in the plasma associated with the source 211.

Control of the electron density distribution in the control region allows one to influence the trajectories of the different beams of the initial radiation, according to the

FIG.

wavelength of these beams. This is illustrated in [figure]_h 2, which shows two general trajectories of two types of beam:

[] beams of a first wavelength λ_1 . ^{these} These beams have the trajectory R1. _h and

5 [] beams of a second wavelength λ_2 , which is shorter than the first wavelength λ_1 . ^{these} These beams have the trajectory R2.

^{a preferred embodiment}
In [the preferred application] of the invention which is illustrated here, an electron density distribution is
10 established in the control region such that the electron density is greater at a distance from a median initial radiation emission line than it is on the [said] median initial radiation emission line.

^{embodiment shown in}
15 The "median initial radiation emission line" corresponds, in the ^{FIG.} [case of] [figure]_h 2, to the straight line A. Note that in the ^{embodiment} [case] illustrated here, the chamber is typically in the shape of a round cylinder, and that the initial radiation is emitted with a ^{generally} [more or less] axi-symmetrical distribution of the beams, around line A.

20 The configuration of the electron density distribution desired in this ^{embodiment} [case] is illustrated diagrammatically in [figure]_h 3, which shows electron density curves. ^{FIG.}

In this figure, it can be seen that the electron density value is greater at the edges of the chamber (distanced from
25 line A) than in the middle of this chamber (close to line A).

It can also be seen that the three electron density curves that are shown diverge in the peripheral region of the chamber. [We will come back to this aspect.]

[It will be seen that such] ^{Such} an electron density distribution is opposite to the electron density distribution that can normally be observed in the chamber of a radiation source.

In the case of a chamber of known type, [in fact] one generally observes a higher density at the ^{center} [centre] of the chamber.

The density configuration shown in [figure] ^{FIG.} 3 is therefore specific, and it is created by design for the ^{embodiment} [application] of the invention described here. In order to create such an electron density distribution in the control region, energy is injected into the plasma of the chamber 21 along the [said] line A.

This input of energy can be effected, for example, by a beam of electrons or by a laser beam, directed into the control region along the axis defined by line A.

This input of energy is illustrated diagrammatically by arrow E. It is used to [ionise] ^{ionize} the plasma in the control region, along line A.

Prior to this input of energy, it was possible to establish an electric voltage at the terminals of the chamber containing the plasma, the [said] terminals being spaced along

the general direction defined by the [said] median initial radiation emission line.

[Figure] 3^{FIG.} diagrammatically represents such terminals 2121 and 2122.

5 It is thus possible to create an electron density distribution of the type [of those] shown in [figure] 3^{FIG.}.

Note that such a distribution can be obtained by starting from a density distribution of ^aknown type, in which the density is higher at the ^{center}[centre] of the chamber.

10 The input of energy and the [ionisation]^{ionization} associated with it is [in fact] used in this ^{embodiment}[case] to "invert" the density configuration, and to obtain a higher density close to the peripheral walls of the chamber.

[Figure] 3^{FIG.} shows three density distribution curves as
15 mentioned.

These three curves are ^{generally}[more or less] coincident in the central region of the chamber (close to line A), but have different values of density close to the walls of the chamber.

20 These three curves correspond to successive states of the electron density distribution, when [ionisation]^{ionization} of the central zone of the control region has been effected.

At the end of such an [ionisation]^{ionization}, ^{there can be}[we find] an electron density which is already higher at the periphery of the control region.

If, however, one then allows the plasma thus ~~[ionised]~~^{ionized} to develop, this configuration will then become accentuated, and the value of the density will again increase at the periphery. In fact the high-density electrons present in great quantity at the periphery of the chamber will have a tendency to cause the internal walls of this chamber to melt, single layer of wall coating by single layer of wall coating.

This melting leads to an additional input of electrons at the periphery of the chamber, which still further increases the electron density in this area.

~~[Figure]~~^{FIG.} 2 specifically represents a window 222 which is positioned at the focal point of the beams on the trajectory R2.

This window corresponds to a resource for recovery of beams of a desired wavelength, from amongst the beams of the initial radiation.

It has been seen that the different beams emitted by the initial radiation R0 were deflected in a different manner, by the electron density distribution which existed in the control region, according to their wavelength.

This selective deflection causes the beams associated with a given wavelength to converge toward a specific point on line A, ~~which~~^{referred to herein as} which we will call the "focal point".

The position of the focal point on line A (a position that can be defined by a curvilinear abscissa of a marker

linked to the [said] line A) therefore depends on the wavelength associated with this focal point.

[Figure] ^{F16.} 2 shows focal points F1 and F2 associated respectively with the beams of trajectories R1 and R2.

5 The window 222 is thus positioned at focal point F2. The function of this window is to allow to pass only the beams arriving at line A ^{generally} [more or less] at focal point F2 (that is the beams of wavelength λ_2). To this end, window 222 includes an opening 2220 which is preferably ^{centered} [centred] on line A.

10 This window thus ^{forms} [constitutes] an advantageous resource for recovering only the beams of a desired wavelength. It thus improves filtration of the beams emitted by the initial radiation.

In this way, it is possible to have windows in any
15 desired position on line A, according to the wavelength that one wished to isolate.

It can therefore be seen that the invention allows beams of a desired wavelength (or at desired wavelengths, to be exact) to be isolated in an efficient manner.

20 [And in the case of] ^{with respect to} the invention, [one is not] ^{there is no} exposing ^{of} a filtration resource, such as a multi-layer mirror, to debris that [is liable to] ^{can} damage it.

[In the case of] ^{with respect to} the invention, the fact that the desired beams are recovered at a specific point toward which they were

deflected already allows a large part of any debris emitted by the source 21 to be avoided.

Implementation of recovery resources such as a window allows the quantity of debris to be reduced still further.

5 The result is that at the end of this filtration, there is ^{very little or} no debris [at all - or very little in any case]

Note that downstream of the focal point of the beams that need to be recovered, it is possible to create resources for optical conditioning of the beam formed by these filtered
10 beams.

In particular, this optical conditioning can be a collimation and/or a focussing process.

The recovered beam can therefore be sent directly toward a lithography mask.

15 It is also possible to direct the recovered beam toward additional filtering resources, if so desired.

Such additional filtering resources can include a multi-layer mirror like those which constitute the filtering resources that are known currently.

20 The layers of such a multi-layer mirror are designed (in composition and thickness) so that the mirror selectively reflects only the beams of a given wavelength (according to a condition known as the Bragg condition, which links the reflectivity of the mirror to the wavelength of the incident
25 beams).

In this variant, several filtering resources are used in series. The resource that is furthest upstream, which performs a selective deflection of beams and their recovery, provides protection for the resource furthest downstream (the multi-
 5 layer mirror) from the debris emitted by the source.

Note finally that it is possible to implement the invention in a device that includes a multiplicity of sources of initial radiation, each associated with resources that can be used to control a distribution of the refraction index in
 10 an associated control region.

This mode of implementation is illustrated diagrammatically in figure ^{FIG.} 4.

In this figure, a multiplicity of chambers 21i which are similar to the chamber 21 already described, direct their
 15 respective radiation along respective median lines A_i , which converge toward a central optic 23.

The central optic can thus receive the beams emitted by one or more chambers 21i, according to the chambers that are active.

20 The distance between the optic 23 and each chamber is adjusted to select the radiation filtering wavelength associated with each active chamber.

It is also thus possible to cause beams of different wavelengths, coming from different chambers, to arrive at the
 25 optic 23.

(In any case, the ^{The} H_{opt} 23 is able to redirect the received beams toward the exterior, and therefore toward other optical processing resources (such as a lithography mask) for example.